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Bashir Jumayyil
Phalange Leader



Raymond Edde
National Bloc Leader



Camille Shamun
National Liberal Party Leader



Gabriel Lahud
Former Army Intelligence Chief

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SPECIAL ANALYSES

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LEBANON: Jumayyil's Quest for the Presidency

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Phalange leader Bashir Jumayyil's threat to disrupt the PLO departure from Beirut by blocking the deployment of Lebanese and French troops underscored his determination not to pass up what he sees as his best, and perhaps only, chance to become president of Lebanon. Recognizing his opportunity early in the Israeli invasion, Jumayyil remarked then he would not be "duped" like his father into accepting promises he would eventually become president if he waited his turn. He reaffirmed his candidacy at a press conference on Friday.

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The recent hardening of Muslim opposition to Jumayyil's candidacy appears to have convinced him that the Sunnis, the Syrians, and the French are colluding to block his election. Jumayyil probably sees reports that longtime rival Raymond Edde is planning to return from self-imposed exile in France as proof of French connivance. Edde is one of Lebanon's most popular political figures, and his candidacy could lure Christian support away from Jumayyil.

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Phalange officials have indicated the parliamentary session today to elect a new president will go forward even if it appears there will not be a quorum. Jumayyil is likely to argue that the intimidation of many deputies who live in Syrian-occupied areas made a quorum impossible, thereby obligating parliament to move to the procedures governing a second ballot on which he could win.

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Getting the Votes Legally

The constitution is vague concerning the need for a quorum beyond the first ballot, but Phalangists and some others have already suggested only a majority is needed for balloting to begin on the second round. In pursuing

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such a gambit, Jumayyil could have a powerful ally in Speaker al-Assad, who has broad procedural powers. If Jumayyil can retain 47 votes, he could be elected with a semblance of legality. []

If Jumayyil's attempts to gain the presidency through the electoral process are thwarted, he may try to put pressure on President Sarkis to dismiss the government and name him prime minister before the end of the President's term on 23 September. Constitutionally, Jumayyil could continue as prime minister and "head of state" indefinitely. With these powers he could choose to delay elections until he felt his prospects for victory were guaranteed. []

There are no recent indications Sarkis and Jumayyil are discussing such an option. They apparently have considered it in the past, however, []

Extra-Constitutional Means

If none of these options work out and Jumayyil still remains committed to gaining the presidency, he probably will try to take it by force. []

3
5 [] Jumayyil's militia is the strongest indigenous force in Lebanon, and he also could count on the support of some of the Maronite-dominated Army. []

4 A Jumayyil government formed by other than constitutional means, however, would lack legitimacy. Without a broad consensus, he could not govern effectively. []

7 If Jumayyil becomes persuaded of this, he might first push for a short extension of Sarkis's term in order to head off the selection of another candidate for a full six years. He would hope an extension would give him more time to overcome Muslim opposition to his own candidacy. []

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Seeking a Proxy

4 If that did not pan out, Jumayyil would first look for a candidate who was open to his influence. He is likely to remain opposed to strong-willed independents like Edde and former Army Intelligence Chief Lahud.

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4 Former President Shamun may be another alternative. His hardline views are similar to Jumayyil's, and he appears to be more acceptable to Sunnis and the Syrians. Shamun might even agree to serve an abbreviated term, giving Jumayyil a chance for the presidency in the near future.

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4 Jumayyil may be suspicious, however, that Shamun-- whose own party was subsumed by the Phalange--will try to use the presidency to rebuild his political base and promote his own successor.

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